



Statement from EPA on Barge Incident Near Gowanus Bay

2/10/2021

EPA has concluded its assessment of the incident that caused a barge containing approximately 850 cubic yards of material dredged from the Gowanus Canal Superfund Site in Brooklyn, NY to become submerged, under high tide conditions, in the Upper New York Bay near Red Hook and Gowanus Bay.

Based on calculations on the barge contents once it was refloated and berthed back at the canal, EPA has concluded that material released from the barge, if any, was minimal. As suspected, the cause of the incident was a horizontal gash on the port side of the barge. This damage was caused by a metal protrusion along the docking location at the sediment processing facility, which has now been repaired.

To prevent incidents in the future, EPA has directed that preventive steps be taken, including that enhanced barge inspections take place, that locations with less exposure to unfavorable sea conditions be evaluated and used when barges are moored for operational reasons, and that a tender boat accompany barges when they must be moored outside the site area.

The dredging of the canal was temporarily halted so that efforts could concentrate on addressing the barge incident. Dredging operations have now resumed. To access the Incident Report, visit www.epa.gov/superfund/gowanus-canal.